

## Open Water

by Jenn Perry

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>Disclaimer: All recognized characters and situations <br>belong to Kevin Williamson, The WB, and Granville Productions and I am in no way affiliated with them. <br>All other characters and situations belong to me.  
>Summary: Joey muses late at night.<br>>Props: To Maeve, for encouraging me in my dreams and <br>being an awesome person-film majors rule! To Heather, for being on my wavelength when no one <br>else is-XPFCers rule! And to Chris, thanks for being my Dawson while I search for my Pacey.<br>>Author Notes: I've never written for these <br>characters before so your feedback is crucial to whether or not I write for them again. Oh, and I <br>know even less about sailing than Dawson, so if I've made some kind of tactical error, please let me know <br>how to fix it. This piece came to me last week at work while I was trying to hash out the next scene of my <br>screenplay, but I just finished it last night.  
><br>>It was peaceful at night. The water lapped against <br>the side of "True Love" as it rhythmically rocked with the waves. The surrounding sea had turned dark as the <br>sun went down, blending the line between water and sky.  
>A small breeze blew through the warm night air, teasing <br>the lowered sail against the mast. A tiny sliver of moon did nothing to illuminate the nearby water. The <br>thousands of stars above gave off only a pinpoint of light,

>making their presence known, sparkling against the <br>midnight backdrop. Down in the cabin below deck,  
>Joey could hear Pacey snoring faintly.<br>  
>Joey took a deep breath and smelled the sea air. <br>The stale odor of salt and sea was familiar from all  
>her years living in Capeside, but this was different. <br>She filled her lungs with the ocean air. This time it  
>smelled new and fresh. It smelled of promise and <br>possibility. Out here in the open Atlantic, they were  
>miles from anything familiar, which Joey felt, was <br>exactly what she needed.  
><br>Getting up from her perch on the bow of the ship,  
>Joey moved quietly across the deck to the stern. <br>The boat creaked as she moved, startling her and  
>stopping her in her tracks. Then it was silent once <br>more. She turned deliberately in a small circle taking  
>in her surroundings. Blackness enveloped her on all <br>sides. There were no signs of life in any direction.  
>It was times like this that she could pretend she and <br>Pacey were the only people in the world.  
><br>Of course, it was that thought that snapped Joey  
>back to reality, only to realize that this was her reality.  
<br>Looking down at herself, she smiled. Her reality at  
>this moment was more a fantasy than real life. Little <br>Joey Potter was dressed in Pacey Witter's oversized  
>gray T-shirt and standing on his small sailboat in the <br>Atlantic Ocean, which was on its way to Florida. The  
>furthest she had ever been from Capeside was Boston. <br>Now she was on her way to Key West with her former  
>enemy, with whom, somewhere along the way, she had <br>fallen in love. It sounded more like one of those movies  
>that she and Dawson used to watch than anything <br>from her own life.  
><br>Dawson.  
><br>The emotions that had played across his face when  
>he told her to go to Pacey were frozen in her mind <br>and weighed heavy on her heart. The person who  
>had been everything to her since she could remember <br>had slowly become less important this year. Life-  
>changing events had been shared with Jen or Pacey <br>and then with Dawson, almost as an afterthought.  
>Not only her feelings for Pacey or the subject of her <br>unity mural, but little things like dealing with her  
>smarmy boss at the marina or her PSAT scores.<br>  
>When her PSAT scores had come, Joey had waited <br>twenty minutes for Pacey to ride his bike over after  
>she had called him. She had stared at the envelope <br>as it lay on the table, as if it were a snake, ready to  
>strike. When he had finally arrived, she had made <br>him open the letter. She had told him it was because  
>he had been asking her if they had come every day for <br>the past three weeks, but they both knew it was because  
>she was so nervous that her hands wouldn't stop shaking. <br>He had remained stone-faced for a brief moment after  
>reading the contents to himself to make her sweat <br>before a huge grin replaced it. When he read her  
>scores out loud, she couldn't believe it. They had started  
<br>screaming, laughing and jumping up and down. "Potter,  
>you're brilliant!" he had said before wrapping her in a <br>huge bear hug. Joey wrapped her arms around herself

>now as she looked north. Dawson hadn't asked until <br>she had mentioned it on Witch Island a week later.

><br>It was rather unsettling that she wouldn't have <br>Dawson to run to when she got home. Life was <br>changing quickly for Joey Potter and she hoped she <br>could find her way through it. She was learning every <br>day how to live without Dawson, how to live on her <br>own terms and go after what she wanted. There was <br>now a new guy who meant everything to her and she <br>was scared. Not because she wasn't sure of <br>herself-she knew she made the right choice-but <br>because this was the first time she really felt she <br>didn't need Dawson. She felt liberated in a way she <br>never thought she would have-she was finally discovering <br>herself.

><br>Joey started when she felt a pair of strong arms <br>encircle her waist. She sighed as she settled back <br>against his bare chest. Joey had never thought <br>she'd be the kind of girl who melted, but every time <br>Pacey touched her, she did.

><br>"Isn't it past your bedtime, Josephine?" Pacey <br>whispered in her ear.<br>>"I couldn't sleep. Too many thoughts running through <br>my mind, I guess. So I came up top for some fresh air <br>to clear my head. Sorry if I woke you."<br>>"What's going on, Jo?"<br>>"You know the usual-did I get the bonus right on <br>my English final? Did I put the right amount of <br>postage on that scholarship application? How can <br>steal this shirt when we get back without you noticing?-"

><br>"You were thinking about him, weren't you?" Pacey <br>interrupted, in a non-accusatory tone.<br>>Joey stopped, not knowing how to answer. He <br>probably wouldn't believe her if she said no, but she <br>knew he'd be hurt if she said yes. She remained <br>silent.

><br>Pacey continued, "It's okay if you are. Hell, I thought <br>about him all day when I wasn't thinking those impure <br>thoughts about you in that bikini." Joey elbowed him, <br>but felt a blush rise on her cheeks. "Face it, <br>yesterday, we lost our best friend, possibly for good. <br>That's huge," he paused. "If we break up when we get <br>home, he's not going to be there to pick up the pieces. <br>And I don't think Capeside is ready for the dynamic <br>duos of Joey and Jen or Pacey and Jack."

><br>Joey smiled in spite of herself, picturing a world <br>where that could happen.<br>>"It just puts a lot of pressure on a situation that <br>already has plenty of pressure. I'm sure it's only a <br>matter of time before the pressure makes us crack <br>and proves him right," Pacey concluded.

><br>"Pace, you're right, I was thinking about him, but not <br>like that. I know I made the right decision and I'm <br>grateful to Dawson for giving me the push I needed <br>to tell you how I feel. I'm just hoping time can heal <br>Dawson's broken heart." Joey turned around in his <br>arms to face him. "For the past year or so, I was <br>looking for myself, trying to discover who I am. And

>as crazy as it sounds, I think I found myself in you. <br>You can  
read me better than anyone. You know when  
>to push and when to let go. You encourage me, <br>challenge me, and  
love me in a way that no one else  
>has before. I like the person that I am when I'm <br>with you. I  
know I didn't make a mistake when I  
>picked you, Pacey. You're the one for me."<br>  
>Joey looked deep into his eyes, hoping he knew she <br>meant every  
word. Pacey brushed a hair off her face  
>and held her head in his hands, studying her. He leaned <br>in after  
a moment and kissed her soundly. Joey was  
>breathless when he pulled back.<br>  
>"Come to bed, Jo."<br>  
>The End.<br>  
>Anyone for a sequel? You know what to do:<br>Loveyoulots@email.com

> <p><p>

End  
file.